



Handbook for Clinical Faculty & Trainees

2020-2021

This handbook is intended to guide the Academic Affiliate Faculty and Students before and during their clinical rotation at VA Western Colorado Health Care System, 2121 North Avenue Grand Junction, CO 81501



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Our Mission, Vision, & Values:

VA's Mission Statement:

To fulfill President Lincoln's promise *"To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan"* by serving and honoring America's Veterans.

Our Mission

VA Western Colorado Health Care System exists to serve the Veteran through the delivery of timely quality care by staff who demonstrate outstanding customer service, the advancement of health care through research, [and the education of tomorrow's health care providers](#).

Our Vision

VA Western Colorado Health Care System will be recognized locally, regionally, and nationally as a leader in quality patient care, positive customer service, medical/allied health education, health-related research, and employment opportunities.

Core Values: We are dedicated to upholding and preserving the values defined in the **I-Care** program:



Integrity: Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

Commitment: Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Advocacy: Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Respect: Treat all those I serve and with whom I work dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

Excellence: Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistake, and rigorous in correcting them.

Welcome to the VA Western Colorado Health Care System



We are proud to welcome you to the VA Western Colorado Health Care System. We hope that you find your clinical education opportunities challenging and professionally fulfilling. Our staff members take pride in the quality of care delivered to the Veteran population and have significant contributions to make toward student education. Please do not hesitate to ask staff questions during your clinical experiences, we actually encourage it!

We feel that each school and program have a unique approach to offer in the delivery of patient care. It is our hope that you will find an environment that will promote your professional growth and at the same time give you meaningful learning experiences.

Elizabeth Roten, RN, MSN
Chief of Organizational Development and Education
Designated Learning Officer/Designated Education Officer
(970) 242-0731 ext. 6054

Important Numbers:

Main VA Phone Number: (970) 242-0731
Infection Control: ext. 2873
Safety/Risk Manager pager: 700

In the event of an emergency, call VA Police @ 6911

- ❖ Identify yourself, your location, and what the emergency is, such as a medical emergency, fire, police, or violent patient or visitor.
- ❖ *VA Police will also be alerted by depressing both Ctrl keys together on any computer keyboard. You do not have to be logged on.*

Emergency Overhead Codes:

- **CODE RED** = Fire
- **CODE BLUE** = Medical Emergency/Cardiac Arrest
- **CODE GREEN** = Missing High-Risk Patient
- **CODE ADAM** = Infant/Child Abduction
- **CODE BLACK** = Bomb Threat
- **CODE GREY** = Disruptive Behavior
- **CODE SILVER** = Weapon/Hostage/Armed Aggressor
- **CODE ORANGE** = Hazardous Material Spill
- **CODE TRIAGE INTERNATIONAL** = Activate the Emergency Operations Plan

Make sure you review with your preceptor where the fire alarms, extinguishers, and fire exits are in the clinical or administrative area you are assigned to. Follow the instructions of your VA supervisor.

Meet Your Education Contacts:

The Department of Organizational Development & Education (OD&E) team is uniquely comprised of interdisciplinary educators who support and actively contribute to the agency's mission, vision and goals. Our diverse expertise enables the success of our clinical trainee programs and actively supports the integration of specialized knowledge into the framework of organizational succession planning and talent management across the agency. We are excited that you are here and want to ensure you have a robust clinical training experience.

If you have any questions or concerns during orientation or your initial work experiences, please contact one of the following Education representatives:

Academic Education Staff:



Dr. Holly
Buschhorn
GME Medical Director
Holly.Buschhorn@va.gov



Elizabeth Benton,
MBA
Program Specialist to
the Chief/GME
Program Coordinator
(970) 263-5077



Kari Weirath, RN,
MSN, PMHNP-BC
Director of Nurse
Practitioner Residency
& Advanced Training
(970) 216-7120



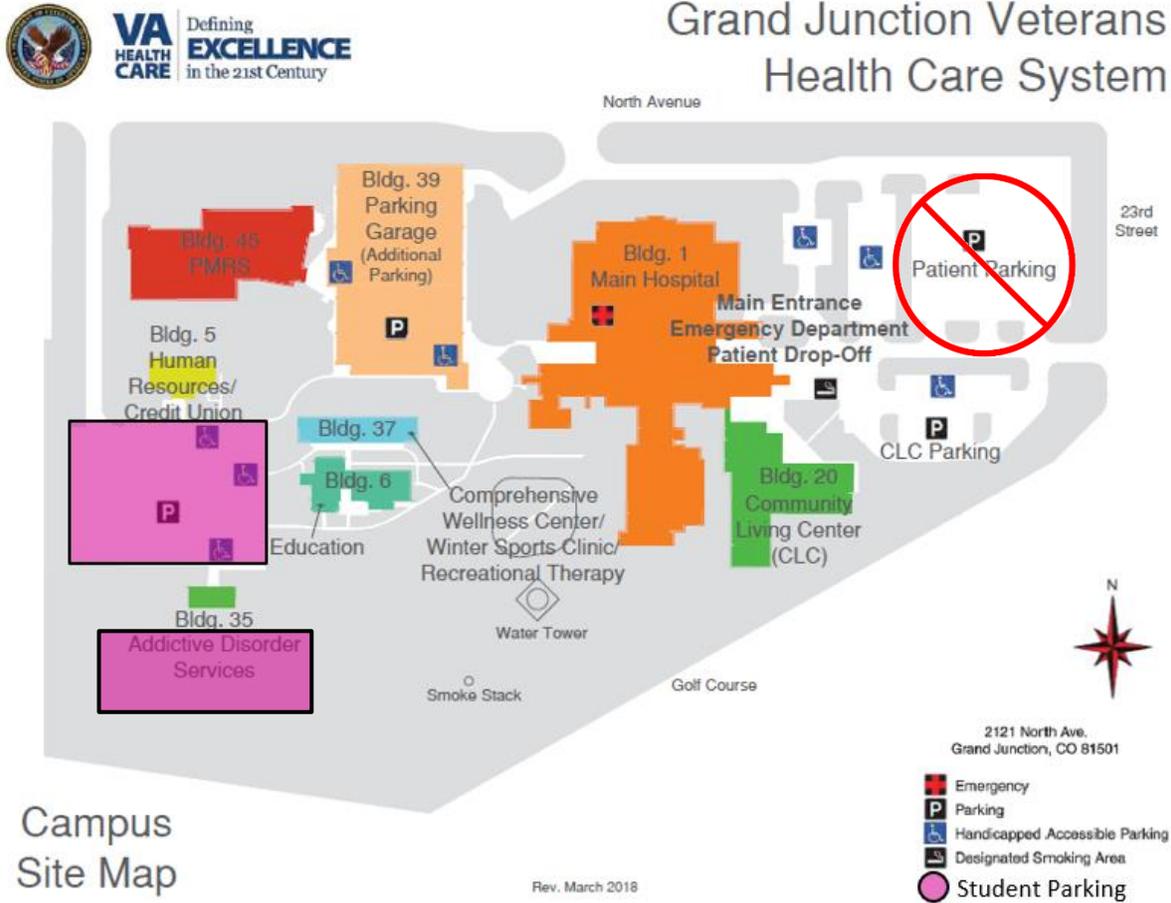
Julie Gingerich, MSN,
RN, NPD-BC, CNML
Director of Academic
Nursing & Clinical Trainee
Experiences
(970) 263-6290

If you would like to email us as a group for a question regarding academic education, please <mailto:VHAGRJACADEMICS@va.gov>

You are also encouraged to ask questions of the unit manager, charge nurses, and preceptors for your clinical area.

Campus Map & Parking:

Student parking is located West of the Main Hospital. Residents must park in either Physician or Employee designated parking lots. Physician parking is located on the top level of the parking garage.



Building # and Function:

- ① Main Hospital: All hospital units, and Canteen restaurant
- ⑤ Human Resources: Fingerprinting
- ⑥ Education: Education staff offices
- ②① Community Living Center (CLC)

Please note: Faculty and Students park in the Employee Parking Lots, DO NOT park in East Patient Parking lot.

Getting Started: Clinical Training at the VA

Visit our **Organizational Development & Education (OD&E) Internet Site:**

<http://www.grandjunction.va.gov/education/education.asp>

Steps for on-boarding, orientation, and information relating to clinical trainee placement, including forms, may be accessed from this web page.

How May We Help You?

VA Preceptor Responsibilities

- Models professional clinical practice
- Shares expertise in clinical area: preceptors maintain expertise in the area they work, and students need to access this expertise and learn from Clinical Experts.
- Promotes Student Learning:
 - Support & integrate students into care of patients and into the healthcare system while **maintaining responsibility for the patient**
 - Directs students appropriately to provide care while collaborating with the education team
 - Shares clinical expertise with the next generation of healthcare team
 - Teaches Best Practices in clinical area: Time management & Organization strategy; Standards of Practice; Clinical Skills; Procedure Approaches; Documentation/Communication; Problem-solving/Critical Thinking etc...
 - Creates a positive student-preceptor relationship communicating and sharing their role as a clinical healthcare provider
 - Identifies appropriate learning opportunities for students
- Promotes Patient and Student Safety:
 - **Maintains Responsibility for Patients**
 - Helps Students Reduce Patient Safety Risks
 - Ensures understanding of what students can and cannot do
 - Collaborates with Academic Education Team to ensure students are prepared to provide care
- Communicates:
 - Provides Feedback to Academic Education team
 - Communicates with students effectively
 - Models effective communication, Veteran education and clinical teamwork
 - Provides feedback and clear direction to students
- Evaluates:
 - Completes Preceptor Evaluations regarding student performance
 - Shares thoughts and reflection related to precepting experience with clinical scholars and educators

Unit Responsibilities

- Unit routine/report – days/afternoons/nights.
- Patient assignments/patients not appropriate for student experience
- Share best point of contact for HPTs (days/nights)
- Educate trainees on equipment: beds, pumps, compression devices, etc.
- Inform Faculty of student related issues immediately (i.e. if there are any other students on unit, low census, student concerns, etc.)

Clinical Trainee Responsibilities

- Comply with the policies and procedures of VA Western Colorado Health Care System
- Maintain and safeguard confidentiality of all patient information, records, etc. Copy and pasting documents or cloned documentations in the health record is forbidden.
- Notify Clinical Instructor:
 - If you are ill and unable to make it to your clinical rotation
 - If you are going to be late to clinical or conference
 - If there is a conflict with your preceptor
 - If your assigned clinical site is not busy (and we will attempt to relocate you)
 - If you have been invited to attend a procedure off unit with your patient
 - If there is a safety issue/concern affecting your patient
 - If you witness an event that warrants debriefing
 - If you need help with your clinical paperwork
 - If going on or off the unit
- Report to clinical preceptor when leaving the unit for breaks and conferences and give synopsis of care at the end of each clinical day. Untoward signs and symptoms are reported when detected. The student is responsible for informing the assigned preceptor which procedures are beyond his/her capability and which procedures he/she must contact their instructor for supervised performance.
- Maintain copy of complete list of skills able to perform in the clinical setting.
- Communicates professionally and advocates for and responds to Veteran's needs.
- Complete the VA National Online Survey & Clinical Trainee Evaluation to share the evaluation of your clinical experience: <https://www.va.gov/oa/surveys/>
- **Complete Out-Processing:** Return identification badge to Julie Gingerich, building 6, room 112.
 - **Note:** at completion of clinical rotation the clinical relationship between student and VA is terminated.

Keeping our Veterans Safe

Veterans are twice as likely to die from suicide as Non-Veterans. **The National VA Suicide Hotline is 800-273-8255.** You have a duty to help prevent suicidal behaviors. Make sure that the environmental risk factors are reduced by eliminating structures that could support a hanging object, reduce strangulation devices and access to sharp objects. Many hospital suicides occur during shifts during hand-off points between clinical staff.

Hand hygiene is the single most important measure to reduce the risks of transmitting germs from one person to another or from one site to another. Make sure that you wash your hands at least 15 seconds, including the areas between the fingers, above the knuckles and wrists, and under fingernails. Alcohol gels are also available but should not replace hand washing if your hands are soiled, if you are leaving an isolation room, or if you are dealing with *Clostridium difficile*.

Guidelines for Customer Care:

ALWAYS use a pleasant tone of voice and an approachable facial expression

- **Knock before entering a room**
- Introduce yourself
- SMILE 😊
- State your role or purpose
- Give the patient your full attention
 - Maintain eye contact
 - Invite Veteran to ask questions
 - Say “Good morning/afternoon/evening”
- Before your leave, ask if there is anything else that you can do
- Greet Veteran by name and former rank if he/she prefers

Restraint and Seclusion

The use of restraints and/or seclusion is a restriction of personal liberty and has serious legal ramifications.

- A Licensed Independent Practitioner (LIP) or a licensed, qualified and authorized individual (RN) completes an assessment of the patient.
- Students should never initiate or apply restraints of any kind.
- The patient demonstrates behaviors indicating a potential need for restraints.
- The reasons for the patient's behavior is assessed and analyzed.
- All alternatives to restraint and seclusion have been considered or tried.
- The clinical judgment for the use of restraints has been achieved.
- The least restrictive device is used.
- An order for the restraint is obtained.
- The patient and family are educated about the need for restraints.
- The patient's safety is monitored and the findings are documented.
- Ensure that the patient is able to participate in the care process as much as possible.
- Attempt a trial release of the restraints if an improvement in the behavior is evident.

Know Your Role in Safety

You are responsible for following all safety rules and to report unsafe conditions to your VA Supervisor/designee and/or Faculty. Hard copies Material Safety Data Sheets use the Quick links on the Home Web Page- scroll down to MSDS.

Injury or Accident Reporting

If you are injured during your clinical rotation, immediately tell your clinical preceptor and clinical nurse educator.

The VA will assure that all trainees with occupational injuries (including exposure to infectious or environmental hazards), will be assessed and, in emergency cases, initially evaluated and treated at VA.

For any follow-up care you will need to consult your own Primary Care provider or academic student health clinic.

Remember, there are no dumb questions when it comes to keeping you, your co-workers, and our patients' safe. Please ask your preceptor, charge nurse, or manager if you have specific concerns while working in your area.

COVID-19 Precautions:

Western Colorado Health Care System (WCHCS) is committed to the safety of our Veterans, employees, and Clinical Trainees. The Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) and CDC guidelines shall be followed. Measures are being observed in relation to COVID-19 preparedness which may include use of PPE, mandatory screening, and appropriate learning assignments. **No WCHCS clinical trainee shall be assigned care of an active COVID-19 patient or person under investigation (PUI) of COVID-19.** This means if a Veteran is suspected of having COVID-19, the clinical trainee is to exit care immediately.

It is the responsibility of: The Western Colorado Health Care System to provide you with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during your clinical rotation. You will be subject to COVID-19 screening upon entry into the main building, a cloth mask may be required upon entry into the building (these will be provided for you). Please immediately sanitize your hands as soon as you enter the building. After this process you may proceed to your clinical unit.

COVID-19 Infection Prevention and PPE Usage

All VA Western Colorado Health Care System personnel including trainees should wear a cloth face mask at all times while they are in the health care facility. **No WCHCS clinical trainee shall be assigned care of an active COVID-19 patient or person under investigation (PUI) of COVID-19.** This means if a Veteran is suspected of having COVID-19, the clinical trainee is to exit care immediately.

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person contact via respiratory droplets through close contact (within about 6 feet).

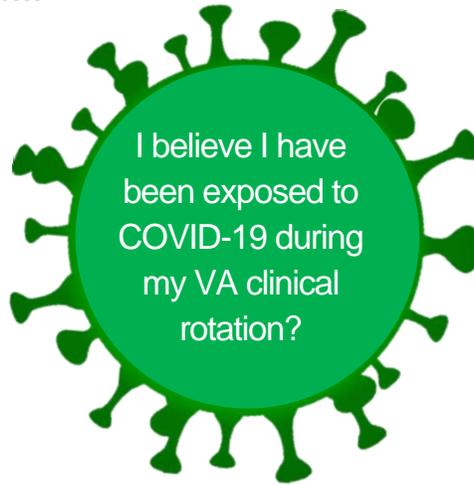
CDC Recommendations: Adhere to Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions with special attention to donning, doffing, and appropriate disposal of PPE.

Personal Protective Equipment or PPE is very important in protecting Healthcare personnel and in preventing the spread of infection. Personal protective measures for healthcare trainees, who will **not** be caring for patients with known or suspected COVID-19:

- **Hand Hygiene**
 - This is the single most important step in preventing the spread of infection
 - Use soap and water (for 20 seconds) or an alcohol based hand sanitizer
 - Use and hygiene before and after all patient contact and removing PPE
- **Cloth Face Covering**
 - Used as a physical barrier to protect the wearer from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing, or coughing.
 - Wear at all times while in the clinical setting and walking around the hospital
 - Make sure the mouth and nose are fully covered, and fits snugly against the sides of your face
 - Use a new cloth mask daily or wash your own cloth mask after each clinical day, allowing it to dry completely before reusing.
 - *Note: due to not caring for COVID-19 patients, students will not be wearing N95 masks or PAPR hoods.*
- **Practice Safe Social Distancing**
 - Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet (2 arm's length) away from others
 - Follow the guides on the floor in areas where people line up
- **Stay Home if You Are Sick**
 - Know the symptoms of COVID-19, which can include the following: cough, fever, chills, muscle pain, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell.
 - Symptoms can range from mild to severe and appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Health Professions Trainees: COVID-19 Exposure Plan

What should I do if...



1. Report this IMMEDIATELY to your clinical preceptor and instructor/program director.
2. Contact the Infection Prevention Nurse (IP RN): Jose Trujillo @ 970-433-2929
Do NOT wait until the end of the shift.
3. Contact the OD&E Department: Director of Academic Nursing & Clinical Trainee Experiences, Julie Gingerich @ 970-263-6290.
4. VA Western Colorado Health Care System may provide you with a test for COVID-19 if you meet criteria based on investigation from IP RN.
5. You must also plan to follow up with student health via your academic program if needed.

High-Risk Clinical Activities:

- 1. Medication Administration-** Medications must be administered under constant and direct supervision of preceptor or clinical instructor. **Medication Security and Safety Is Everyone's Responsibility**
 - **All medications must be secured at all times.**
 - **Med Carts must be locked (no meds on top of carts).**
 - **All patient medications must be locked, including self-med protocol**
 - **Controlled Substances (narcotics) must be double locked.**
 - **Syringes containing pre-drawn medications must be labeled with name of drug, time, date, and name of person filling and labeling.**
 - **Offices and staff work areas or team rooms must be kept free of unattended medication and pre-drawn syringes.**
- 2. Procedures-** No procedures should be done independently by a student and must be done under constant and direct supervision of preceptor or clinical instructor. Utilize Mosby's Skills as procedure manual. **Any new procedure that has not been performed successfully by a student must include the direct and constant supervision of preceptor or clinical instructor!**
- 3. Communication- Communication breakdown is the #1 threat to patient safety!** Please communicate any and all concerns regarding patient safety (i.e. spills, potential hazards, significant changes in condition or behavior) and review the Student MCM for further information about communication.
- 4. Mealtimes-** Assisting patients at meal times require student awareness of dietary orders and limitations. Special diets and feeding precautions must be observed.
- 5. Care of the Patient with Oxygen-** Patients with oxygen are not permitted in the smoke shack, or to smoke on VA grounds. Students should educate patients not to smoke while using oxygen and report this activity immediately.
- 6. Assisting Patients with Mobility-** Use of lifts required constant and direct supervision of preceptor or clinical instructor. This clinical activity requires two staff members.
- 7. Transporting Patients Off the Unit-** Communicate with preceptor prior to transportation of patient, and upon returning the patient to their unit. Ensure appropriate equipment follows patient (i.e. oxygen). Know basic code status of patient, medications, diagnoses, plan of care prior to taking a patient off-unit. For any patient on isolation precautions, speak with the unit preceptor prior to transporting for any reason. Safeguard all lines, drains, tubes, etc during transport.
- 8. Showers/Bathroom Interventions-** Be aware of any ADL deficits, safety, and accommodative needs the patient may have prior to these interventions.
- 9. Patients with High Risks, Altered Thought Processes, or Confusion-** Be aware of any deficits, safety, and accommodative needs the patient may have prior to care.

Additional Information:

Cell Phone Usage

The personal use of cell phones is prohibited unless used at specified break or lunch times. At no time should the cell phones be carried or utilized in patient care areas or while caring for a patient unless use is directly linked to care. Phone calls relating to one's personal business should be conducted during breaks and lunch unless there is an emergency. Only in an emergency will one be called away from patient care for personal phone calls. It is inappropriate to conduct personal business while on duty.

Social Media & Photography:

As social media and the need to stay "connected" has become an engrained part of most everyone's day, even while at work, we in healthcare must ensure we act diligently to safeguard Protected Health Information (PHI) and HIPAA. Students often continually update their "status" and take "selfies." Doing so in the clinical environment poses a **serious** risk for breaching HIPAA.

The Western Colorado Health Care System has a **strict policy about photography and/or videography** of persons on GJVHCS property.

- **NO PHOTOS or VIDEOS of any kind** may be taken on government property, this includes personal use of cell phone cameras. This policy is for the purpose of protecting our patients' privacy and safeguarding of our facility.

It is important that you always protect patient sensitive confidential information. Do not print out patient information and leave it at the printer for others to read. Do not take photographs of health records or other VA private information. You may not use thumb drives or any other personally owned USB device on VA computers.

Veteran PHI may not be stored or shared using Google Docs or any other similar file sharing site. As a trainee at the VA you must not store Veteran information on any non-VA site from any device, including from your home, your affiliate institution, your mobile tablet, or cell phone.

Student documentation must be co-signed by a licensed provider. Make sure your documentation is timely and accurate.

Out-Processing:

Return identification badge to Julie Gingerich, building 6, room 112 and complete the evaluation of your clinical experience. Upon completion of your clinical trainee rotation, the clinical relationship between student and VA is terminated.

On the last rotation of your academic year, please go to the OAA website to complete the learner's perception survey: <http://www.va.gov/oaa/surveys>.